(b) if so, whether Buckingham Canal is also included in that; and

(c) by when they are likely to be declared and developed for shipping and navigation?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No specific time-frame can be given in this regard at this stage.

Development of National Waterways Project in Kerala

1743. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team led by the Chairman of the Inland Waterways Authority was sent to Kerala to hold discussions with State Government officials regarding the development of National Waterways Project in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The officers of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) have held several rounds of discussions with the officials of the State Government of Kerala. Another round of discussions led by Chairman, IWAI with the State Government officials is also to take place shortly.

Four-Laning of National Highway No. 17 in Kerala

1744. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government had agreed to implement Rs.5000 crore highway project in Kerala to develop National Highway (NH-17) for four-lane traffic; and

(b) if so, the sectors in NH-17 already having four-lane and the sectors proposed to be taken up for converting to four-lane under the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) The entire stretch of NH-17 in Kerala from Karnataka/Kerala border to Eddapally nearing 421 km. length has been identified for four-laning